

Issues in Education

Ratnawati Mohd Asraf

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STANDARD SETTING METHODS

Noor Lide Abu Kassim and Ahmad Zamri Khairani

INTRODUCTION

In the standard setting literature, a number of methods or procedures have been developed for the setting of standards or cutoff scores on criterion-referenced tests. These methods can be classified in a number of ways. These classifications are significant as they help elucidate three important issues in standard setting: (1) the way the underlying trait or measured construct is conceptualized, (2) the focus of judgment, and (3) the use of additional information in the standard setting process. This paper discusses several methods or procedures that have been used and studied in the setting of educational standards and the different classifications of standard setting methods that have been proposed.

STANDARD SETTING METHODS

The first systematic procedure for the setting of cutoff scores on criterion-referenced tests was developed in 1954 by Nedelsky (Zieky, 2001; Stone, 1996). This was followed by other procedures or methods (e.g., Angoff and Ebel procedures). By the 1980s, about forty standard setting methods and standard adjusting procedures had been developed (Berk, 1986). However, with increased emphasis on legal issues, fairness, and attention on the defensibility of derived cutoff scores, strong criticisms were raised against the validity of these 'non-objective methods' and new methods have been recently developed.